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# DRAMA

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## SPECIAL NUMBER

CONTAINING

### LIST OF AFFILIATED SOCIETIES MEMBERS

### OFFICERS OF THE LEAGUE

and the

### COUNCIL'S REPORT

to be presented at the

### ANNUAL MEETING

### BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION

CONFERENCE HALL NUMBER TWO

on Friday, June 27th 1924

at 3 P.M.

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Issued by the BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE, a Federation of Societies and other Organizations working for the Development of the Drama. Individual Membership is also open to all who are concerned with the practice or enjoyment of the Art of the Theatre, and may be acquired by payment of the Annual Subscription of £1 1s., entitling the Member to all privileges of the League, including the free receipt of the League's Monthly Magazine. Full particulars from the Hon. Sec.,  
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# ANNUAL REPORT

IN submitting the fifth Annual Report of the British Drama League, the Council are happily able to record a continuance of the progress which was apparent during the year ending June 30th, 1923. At that date the League's membership stood at 712. It has now risen to 868. There have been 98 resignations. This leaves a net increase of 156. The 254 new members include 133 individual members and 121 affiliated societies. The total number of affiliated societies now on the register amounts to 360.

*The Library.*—The outstanding incident of this year has been the growth of the Library, which has now been placed on a satisfactory footing thanks to a grant of £200 which was made for this purpose by the Carnegie Trust in August last. This grant has enabled the League to buy printed plays as they have been asked for by its members; and the Library now contains some 3,000 volumes. Single copies of plays are lent free to members for a period of two weeks. Complete sets of parts are lent for a booking fee of 2s. 6d. for one week and 5s. for six weeks. And over 7,000 copies of plays have been lent out to members during the past year. The Council regrets to report the resignation of Miss M. Dalston from the post of Librarian. This occurred in February last. Miss Dalston's place has been filled by Miss A. Doherty.

*Costumes.*—The last report recorded that Miss de Reyes, of Citizen House, Bath, had placed at the disposal of our members the entire wardrobe which had accumulated by herself and the late Miss Francis Hope during their joint management of the Citizen House Players. An important addition was made to this stock of costumes by Lord Howard de Walden, who in December last made over his valuable collection of stage armour and costumes which had been used in Celtic operas and plays. This wardrobe is only available to members of the League, and continuous use is made of it.

Practical help in the production of plays has been given to affiliated societies by Miss Gwen Lally, who was appointed by the Kent Education Committee as official instructor on Drama at their summer school at Folkestone, Mr. James Whale and Miss de Castro.

Lectures and addresses have been delivered at Darlington, York, Oxted, Westminster (Annual Meeting of the Village Clubs' Association), Notting Hill Gate, Islington, by Mrs. Penelope Wheeler, Mr. Cyril Wood and Mr. Whitworth.

*Bath Conference.*—The Autumn Conference of Affiliated Societies was held at Bath on October 26th and 27th. The Conference Proceedings opened with a Luncheon at the Guildhall kindly given by the Mayor of Bath to Drama League delegates. This was followed by a performance of "Daviil Ballard," directed and organized by the author, Mr. Charles McEvoy, and played by Bath amateurs. The same evening a public meeting was held in the Pump Room; the speakers were Miss Elsie Fogerty, Mr. Norton Matthews, the President of the Bristol Playgoers, Mr. Bernard Shaw, and Mr. Whitworth. The Chair was taken by Madame Sarah Grand, the Mayoress of Bath. On the following evening Miss de Reyes presented three short plays at her Theatre and Citizen House.

On the Saturday morning the actual Business Conference was held at Citizen House. The matters discussed included the question of authors' royalties, and upon this the following resolution was passed:

"That the Council of the League favours a royalty basis of payment for amateur performances of plays with the proviso that a minimum of 10s. per act should be paid and that the amount of the royalty should be fixed by the dramatist concerned. That the Society of Authors should again be approached, and if they cannot see their way to sanction the scheme, that the League should publish, for the benefit of its members, a list of those dramatists willing to accept the royalty system in lieu of fixed fees."

Mr. Colls (Liverpool Playhouse Circle) raised the question of an increase of subscription in the case of societies with a large membership, and the following resolution was passed :

"That this Conference recommends for the consideration of the Council the adoption of an increase of subscription of affiliated societies. The rate suggested being one guinea for every hundred members."

Mr. Colls, on behalf of the Liverpool Playhouse Circle, invited the League to hold its 1924 Conference in Liverpool. This invitation was gratefully accepted.

In regard to the resolution upon authors' royalties a questionnaire has been despatched to a large number of dramatists. Twenty-eight have replied in favour of the proposal and seven are against it. The remainder are sympathetic but are for various business reasons unable to commit themselves in the matter.

*Plays and Publications.*—The circulation of the magazine has risen commensurately with the membership, but the Council feel that an effort must be made to increase its circulation among individual members of affiliated societies. They draw attention to the fact that copies can be supplied to members of such societies at half-price, namely, 3s. per annum, if not less than ten members of any one society desire to receive it. With an increase of circulation the magazine can be enlarged and much improved.

The second series of Drama League plays was published in November last. It included :

"Ayuli," by Laurence Binyon,

"The Prince," by Gwen John,

"The Lilies of the Field," by John Hastings Turner, and

"Four one-act plays," by A. P. Herbert, Beatrice Mayor, F. Sladen Smith, and Helen Simpson. The reception of these plays has been very favourable. A competition was organized for the best review of the batch of four books, and the prize of five guineas was won by the Hon. Mary Pakington.

A large number of MS. plays still come in for criticism. Reports on fifty-two plays have been sent to members during the past twelve months.

The play competitions of three affiliated societies—Bath Playgoers, Sheffield Playgoers, and the Ashburton Group—have been adjudicated by the League.

*Drama and Education.*—On Tuesday, January 8th, the League took part in the Annual Conference of Educational Associations at University College, Gower Street. A meeting was held in conjunction with the Child Study Society and was well attended, the subject of discussion was "The Diploma in Dramatic Art." The Chair was taken by Mr. Norman McKinnel; the other speakers were Miss Lena Ashwell and Miss Elsie Fogerty.

The Annual Drama League Play Competition among London Social Clubs was again organized, the final competition being held at the Mary Ward Settlement on May 14th. This year the trophy awarded by the League was presented by Mr. Ben Webster to the Dramatic Art Group of the Mary Ward Settlement who, under the direction of Miss Maude Scott, acted a scene from "Arms and the Man."

Mr. W. G. Fay kindly judged the Recitation Competitions of the London Working Boys' Clubs and of the Social Institutes Union for Women and Girls, and Mr. James Whale an Acting Competition by Women's Institutes at Brentwood, Essex.

*British Empire Exhibition.*—Under the Presidency of Lord Burnham a special committee was constituted to organize the Historical Exhibit of Theatre Art which, as announced in the last report, was entrusted to the British Drama League by the Authorities of the Arts Palace at Wembley. The committee included Lord Howard de Walden as Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Albert Rutherston as Chairman, Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth as Hon. Secretary, and Mr. William Archer, Miss Clare Atwood, Mr. Arthur

Bourchier, Mr. Lewis Casson, Miss Edith Craig, Mrs. Gabrielle Enthoven, Mr. J. Fisher White, Mr. Charles Gulliver, Captain Martin Hardie, Mr. Barry Jackson, Mr. Holford Knight, Mr. Allardyce Nicoll, Mr. Walter Payne, and Mr. Norman Wilkinson. Details of the special fund subscribed to defray the cost of the Exhibit have been already published in the April number of DRAMA.

The two Galleries allotted to the Exhibit were formally opened to the public by Miss Ellen Terry on Wednesday, May 21st. In addition to six historical stage models and a new model made by Mr. Gordon Craig, the collection includes the Droeshout Portrait of Shakespeare lent by the Stratford Memorial Theatre, a First Folio and a Quarto of Shakespeare's plays lent by Mr. John Murray, six drawings by Inigo Jones lent by the Duke of Devonshire, a collection of prints lent by Mr. Sabin, Miss Ellen Terry, Miss Edith Craig, Mr. Desmond Coke, Mr. May and others, a collection of Morris Dance costumes lent by Mr. Cecil Sharp, and Folk Dance models lent by Miss Isabel Horn and Miss Gwen John. To these and others who have so kindly contributed to the success of the Exhibition the best thanks of the Council are due.

*Competition for an Architectural Design for a National Theatre.*—In connection with the British Empire Exhibition and with the co-operation of *Country Life* the League has organized the above Competition, the awards in which will be announced at the annual meeting of the League on June 27th. The thanks of the Council are especially due to Mr. James K. Hackett for offering the first prize of £250 "in recognition of the kindness he has always received from the British Public"; and to the members of the Jury of Award for their services in judging the Competition. The Jury includes Mr. J. Alfred Gatch, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Lawrence Weaver, Professor C. H. Reilly, Professor Hubert Worthington, Mr. Harley Granville-Barker, Mr. Albert Rutherston, and Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth. A full report on the Competition, together with reproductions of some of the winning designs, will be published in a special number of DRAMA in July, 1924.

*Finance.*—The election of Mr. Alec Rea as Hon. Treasurer of the League leads the Council to place on record its sincere thanks to the retiring Treasurer, Mr. Robert Mond, for the unflinching and generous assistance he has given to the League since its foundation five years ago. It is not too much to say that had it not been for the timely support of Mr. Mond the League might never have come into existence, and great gratitude is and will always be due to him.

In spite of the growth in the League's membership the financial situation as disclosed by the summary of receipts and payments is not so satisfactory. Last year ended with a balance to the League's credit of £278 7s. 9d. This year ends with a balance of only approximately £151. The difference is mainly to be accounted for by the absence of receipts from lectures in connection with the International Theatre Exhibition at South Kensington. These alone amounted to £159 5s. 2d. There was also a further drop of £30 4s. 8d. in the receipts from the annual Drama League Ball.

Once more the Council must insist that security for the League can only be found in a permanently increased membership, and they again urge every present member to do what he can to bring the numbers to 1,000 at least by the end of 1924. The Council is carefully considering the resolution passed at the Bath Conference which suggested the raising of the subscription of affiliated societies whose membership exceeds 100. The matter will be brought before the Conference to be held at Liverpool in October next.

The number of resignations in the past twelve months is most regrettable. It is true that these are more than counter-balanced by the new memberships, but it is equally true that were it not for these resignations the League would be quite firmly on its feet and would be paying its way as any ordinary business concern must do,

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